



Youth Empowerment System

In 2002 the Youth Empowerment System (Y.E.S.) was created to build the capacity for youth to plan, implement, and evaluate substance abuse prevention strategies in their communities. The mission of the Youth Empowerment System is to promote the prevention of alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse, and violence, in the state of Kentucky.

To accomplish this goal, a Steering Committee composed of Prevention Specialists and Prevention Enhancement Site Coordinators empowers youth groups by (1) directing and evaluating funding proposals and plans to implement strategies that focus on prevention, (2) providing training on best practices, and (3) providing technical assistance on program implementation.

Groups comprise high school-age youth in grades 9-12. Youth across the commonwealth have stepped up to the challenge and exceeded the Steering Committee's hopes and expectations. Activities that youth have been involved in include:

- Educating peers on the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use.
- Educating middle and elementary school students and serving as role models for younger grades.
- Advocating for smoke-free school campuses and smoke-free local sporting arenas.
- Raising community awareness through articles in the newspaper and letters to the editor, public service announcements on the radio, and interviews and appearances on the news.
- Educating key leaders and policy-makers in the community on the issues faced by youth.
- Successfully advocating for social host ordinances to combat underage alcohol use.
- Working to change the culture and social norms of substance use and abuse in the commonwealth.

Each year Prevention Specialists from across Kentucky recognize the efforts and creativity of Kentucky's young people by honoring an outstanding group at the Kentucky Prevention Network Conference. Past group winners have been:

2015	Youth Group of the Year – Fayette County Youth Coalition for Alcohol Education
	Outstanding Achievement Award – Clark County KY-ASAP Policy Youth Network
2011	Barren County High School SADD
2010	Caldwell High School Champions
2009	Owen County TAPP Youth Task Force
2008	Madison County Youth in Action
2007	Owensboro Catholic High School SCRUBS
2006	Perry County Commodores Against Substance Abuse
2005	Meade County Youth in Charge

To find out more about the Y.E.S. program in your area, contact your Regional Prevention Center. See the Related Links box to the right for a link to the Provider Directory.

Contact Information

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